

# **Internal Communications Action Plan**

**Report to the  
Federal Aviation Administration**

**Office of Human Resource Management**

**podesta.com**

**March 5, 1999**

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Office of Human Resource Management**

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## GOAL

To ensure that all FAA employees get clear, timely, and straightforward information on all major decisions concerning policies, programs, procedures, and performance.

## Overview

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The Office of Human Resource Management of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) asked **podesta.com** to conduct an audit of the agency's communications to its employees and other stakeholders, to make recommendations for improvements, and to propose an action plan to implement those recommendations. The action plan that follows is based on our "Audit of Internal Communications," submitted on January 15, 1999, the text of which is appended to this report.

As a follow-up to that audit, **podesta.com** is proposing an overall strategy and plan of action to establish objectives for internal communications, implement needed improvements, and develop better practices. Our audit contained 18 recommendations, based on interviews with agency personnel and a review of the agency's current system of internal communications. Each of the proposed actions in this plan is linked to one or more of the audit's recommendations; a matrix connecting them is included at the end of this plan.

In developing this plan, **podesta.com** provided a list of our recommendations to agency managers and employees who had been interviewed during the audit process. We asked those individuals to rate the importance of each item, on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (most important). We received responses from 46 individuals, including all 16 senior managers and 30 other employees.

The three most highly ranked recommendations all focused on the need to provide employees with clear, candid, and timely information on major agency actions.

The survey also found strong support for the logistical steps needed to implement a new internal communications system – including the recommendation to "make internal communications a key performance metric for management." We consider it a very encouraging sign that more than half of those responding rated this recommendation as most important (5) or very important (4), inasmuch as the respondents will be the subject of such an evaluation themselves. The responses from all 16 senior managers also showed strong support for providing clear, prompt, and straightforward communications to employees. The results of the survey appear in the chart on the following page and in the appendix.

<b>Rating the Recommendations And frequency of "5" and "4" ratings</b>			
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>No. 5</b>	<b>No. 4</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>
Communicate directly to employees on important personnel, benefit, performance, and employment issues	22	18	4.34
Ensure that decisions made at management meetings are communicated clearly, briefly, and promptly	19	17	4.26
Develop an internal communications strategy and create clear, concise, straightforward messages	23	11	4.16
Develop specific communications vehicles to convey information to employees on changes in agency policies and procedures	18	20	4.10
For major agency initiatives, develop and circulate messages, Q&As, and talking points	18	17	4.09
Change the "need to know" communication style in Air Traffic	14	9	3.75
Provide electronic (ccmail, Intranet, Internet) access to all employees	11	15	3.67
Make internal communication a key performance metric for management	11	15	3.66
Make Assistant Administrators personally responsible for communicating agency's messages	12	13	3.52
Use multiple forms of communication to deliver important messages to employees (ccmail, Intranet, fax, etc.)	7	13	3.34
Provide employees with ways to respond directly to internal communications	6	14	3.28
Establish a written policy that clearly defines which vehicle should be used for various kinds of communications	7	12	3.13
Increase number of appearances by Administrator in regions and tech centers	1	9	2.74
Establish committee to coordinate internal communication across lines of business	3	10	2.69
Establish an 800-number communications hot line	6	3	2.49

## Key Objectives

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**A. Establish internal communications as a high management priority.**

**B. Make internal communications clear, candid, accurate, and timely.**

Improving internal communications is not an end in itself, but rather a means to further the agency's mission, achieve its goals, and assist in implementing its strategy. If improving internal communications is established as an important priority for the agency as a whole, then agency managers should be given the responsibility, delegated the authority, and held accountable for effectively, continually, and reliably carrying out a strategically designed and focused internal communications process.

The actions outlined below involve changes in managerial responsibilities, development of new communication vehicles, and expanded electronic connections between and among agency employees.

The success of these proposed actions will depend on the commitment of agency managers and supervisors to implementing a new system of internal communications. In the final analysis, success will require conscious, day-to-day effort across lines of business and throughout the agency.

We believe that the benefits to the agency of this initiative will include:

- Increased understanding of the agency's mission, objectives, and many operations.
- Increased information sharing and teaming across the agency's various lines of business.
- Reduced uncertainty and confusion, enhanced morale, and improved job performance.

## **A. Establish internal communications as an important management priority**

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**We recommend that the Administrator issue a directive to all senior managers outlining a new agency-wide internal communications policy. This new policy should address four specific issues, as discussed further below:**

- The importance of internal communications to the agency's mission.
- The role of senior managers.
- Appointment of a Special Assistant for Communications.
- Appointment of an internal communications team.

### **1. Effective internal communications are essential to the agency's mission.**

The Administrator must make clear to the agency that effective internal communications are not just a feel-good nicety – they are a critical component of the FAA reinvention strategy, essential to the proper functioning of an organization that is striving to become more flexible, responsive, and efficient. Good communication will help unite the lines of business, regions, and other agency offices around a shared vision and common corporate mission.

Toward that end, the Administrator should announce the following steps:

### **2. Managers will be held responsible and accountable for internal communications.**

- Senior managers will implement procedures to ensure that information about major agency actions is successfully “cascaded” through their organizations.
- Senior management meetings will include regular review of internal communications.
- All managers' performance plans will include effective communication as a critical element.
- Annual performance appraisals will include an evaluation of internal communications, which should be clear, candid, accurate, and timely.
- Strong communications skills will be an asset for new management candidates. Senior managers will be offered communication training.

### **3. The Administrator will create and fill a new position, Special Assistant for Communications.**

To make clear the importance of effective internal communications and to ensure accountability, the Administrator will assign primary responsibility for this function to a single individual, reporting directly to the Administrator. This Special Assistant for Communications, who should possess exemplary communications skills, will serve as a message strategist, coordinator, editor, and troubleshooter for the Administrator and senior management.

The Special Assistant for Communications will have the following assignments:

- Oversee and coordinate all corporate internal communications.
- Devise communication strategies, craft messages, and ensure successful delivery of communications throughout agency.
- Ensure that the Administrator's weekly ccmall remains timely and informative.
- Ensure that the information available on the Intranet is fresh and complete.
- Implement this action plan, working through internal agency partners.

The Special Assistant for Communications will be located apart from the Office of Public Affairs – recognizing that the first responsibility of that office is external, not internal communications. The two functions are complementary, not competitive; thus, the resources for internal communications should be drawn from the operating units of the agency, not from the Office of Public Affairs.

### **4. The Administrator will establish an internal communications team.**

Recognizing the value of unofficial communications, the Administrator will draw on existing assets from the various lines of business to pull together an informal team whose purpose is to enhance internal communications by sharing news of interest to agency employees. The Administrator will delegate to one such individual the task of identifying the appropriate participants, organizing, and (at least initially) chairing the team.

The team will meet weekly to discuss news from their respective lines of business. It will have the responsibility of disseminating agency news to each line of business, and the freedom to do so without ongoing editorial review by senior management. The Special Assistant for Communications and a representative of the Office of Public Affairs will also participate.

**To demonstrate her emphasis on internal communications**, the Administrator may want to showcase her new policy through a special event for FAA employees. This option is discussed further below.

## **B. Make internal communications clear, candid, accurate, concise, and timely.**

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**Notwithstanding the Vice President's "Plain Language Initiative," it is no simple matter to communicate simply. We recommend a series of steps to provide the tools needed for successful and effective communications.**

The Special Assistant for Communications should ensure completion of the following action items, working through partners as shown:

### **Partner: Office of Human Resource Management**

#### **1. Prepare a guidance memorandum on effective administrative communications for distribution to all managers.**

This document should emphasize the importance of providing clear, candid, accurate, concise, timely, and relevant information about changes in policies and procedures. Such information:

- Should always discuss how such changes will affect employees directly.
- Should be written in plain English, minimizing the use of acronyms and jargon.
- Should be candid, not sugarcoated, even if delivering unwelcome news.

For the purpose of illustration, this memorandum should also include a "before and after" example.

- The memorandum should also direct each line of business to ensure that managers and supervisors communicate major initiatives and changes in programs, policies, and procedures directly to employees – whenever possible, in person.

#### **2. Address the unique communication challenges within Air Traffic.**

The sheer number of employees within Air Traffic, their increasingly diverse background, and their unique work environment all pose significant challenges to effective communication, yet nowhere is it more needed. In collaboration with the Associate Administrator for Air Traffic Services, the existing model of Air Traffic communications should be re-examined and recommendations for change submitted to the Administrator, toward the end of promoting a more collaborative and collegial pattern of communication among employees and management.

#### **3. Measure performance.**

The success of internal communication is hard to measure, but it is important to assess whether progress is being made. The agency should conduct an annual survey of employees below the associate administrator level to determine whether communications are clear, concise, candid, accurate, timely, and relevant. Such a survey should employ statistical sampling or other reliable techniques.



**Partner: Internal Communication Team**

**1. Prepare a guidance memorandum on dissemination of agency news and information for distribution to all managers.**

This document should encourage lines of business to “cascade” announcements from one level to the next, to maximize direct personal communication between the Administrator and senior managers and mid-level managers, and between mid-level managers and employees.

- The dissemination process should also include the use of ccmall to direct employees to documents on the Intranet or Internet.
- Employees should also be made aware that they can receive FAA press releases automatically by signing up on the Office of Public Affairs’ ccmall distribution list.

**2. Establish a protocol clearly defining the intended purpose and appropriate use of each communication vehicle for distribution agency-wide.**

The purpose of this document is to clarify when, why, and how to use ccmall, voice mail, fax, snail mail, and direct personal contact. For example, with regard to ccmall, consideration should be given to: limiting broadcast messages to major agency-wide announcements; requiring the subject line to be filled in; and requiring urgent messages to senior managers to be copied to deputies or assistants.

- Managers should ensure that this protocol is understood by employees and made part of the orientation package for new hires. The document should also be posted on the FAA Intranet.

**3. Redesign existing publications (paper and electronic) for greater value.**

The existing array of internal FAA publications developed without coordination could be targeted more to specific employee interests. A sample of employees should be surveyed about the usefulness and thoroughness of existing publications to address the following questions:

- How valued is each publication?
- Should existing publications be reoriented to focus on specific topic areas, such as “People and Promotions,” or “Programs and Policy”?
- Are paper publications still needed, or can they be shifted to ccmall and the Intranet?

Based on information from the survey, recommendations should be prepared for the Management Board on steps needed to improve existing publications.

- This memo should also include recommendations for making greater use of the Intranet and Internet to roll out new policies, programs, and procedures.

**Partner: Chief Information Officer**

**1. Ensure that all employees can be reached electronically.**

As a general rule, all employees should be provided a way to access the FAA Intranet, via the Internet or direct dial-up from office or home computer. Toward that end, the following steps should be taken:

- Determine the current status of employee access to the Intranet.
- Assess infrastructure status and requirements to ensure universal access.
- Recommend to the Administrator the most effective and efficient method of connecting those employees currently without access to the FAA Intranet.

**2. Ensure that all employees can use these new tools.**

A step-by-step guidance memorandum should be developed and distributed that shows employees how to familiarize themselves with both the technology and content of the Intranet/Internet. This information should also be made part of the orientation package for new hires.

- In addition, employees with strong online skills should be encouraged to share those skills with others. Where appropriate, employees should be rewarded for electronic mentoring.

**Partner: Senior Managers**

**1. Reinforce the Administrator's themes.**

Prior to every major announcement, an information package should be developed and distributed that includes an executive summary, message points, questions and answers, a press release (if available), and FAA contact information (name, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address). This package should be used by assistant and associate administrators, managers, and supervisors to clarify and underscore the agency's message.

- The package should also be shared with union liaisons and posted on the Intranet/Internet.

**2. Encourage and facilitate employee comments and feedback.**

Employees should have a mechanism for expressing their views on work-related issues – without fear of reprisal and without threatening the chain of command. Managers should ensure that employee comments are always acknowledged.

In addition, consideration should be given to designating a single official within each line of business – or for the agency as a whole – who could serve as an ombudsman and ensure that valuable employee contributions are not ignored.

## **Option: Public event to demonstrate the agency's new commitment to internal communications**

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A special event could be used to showcase the Administrator's emphasis on improved internal communications as a critical element in the agency's reinvention process.

One such event would be an "open senior management meeting" that would be video broadcast (offline and online) to all major FAA facilities to unveil and discuss the agency's new internal communications policy. If necessary, the management board could reconvene afterward to conduct other business in executive session.

Such a discussion could include:

- A real-time exchange between the Administrator and employees in the field, in which the Administrator could respond to questions submitted via ccmall.
- An invitation to employees to voice their opinions on the new initiative.
- A reminder of the resources that are already available – e.g., press releases by ccmall, and the "Hidden Treasures of the Intranet."

Allowing employees to observe a senior management meeting would give them the opportunity to see and hear their leaders interacting with each other and discussing issues of importance to the agency and themselves. In a very direct way, it would illustrate the Administrator's support for a new agency culture of openness and collaboration.

An alternative option that would be less dramatic (though somewhat easier to arrange) would be an internal "press conference" before employees in the FAA auditorium which could also be broadcast. The new internal communications policy could be rolled out with all assistant and associate administrators present and the new internal communications team playing the role of the press.

# **APPENDIX A**

<b>Matrix Relating Audit Report Recommendations and Action Plan Proposals</b>		
<b>Audit-Report Recommendations</b>		<b>Action Plan Proposals</b>
Provide electronic access to all employees	p. 6	<b>p. 8</b>
Establish a protocol that clearly defines the intended purpose and appropriate use of each type of communication	p. 7	<b>p. 7</b>
Broaden the Administrator's reach as key spokesperson	p. 8	<b>p. 5</b>
Associate Administrators should carry messages	p. 8	<b>p. 4</b>
Establish and coordinate internal communication across lines of business	p. 8	<b>p. 6</b>
Eliminate or reduce unnecessary layers	p. 9	<b>p. 7</b>
Develop an internal communications strategy and create clear, concise, straightforward messages	p. 11	<b>p. 6</b>
Address employee needs for information on changes in policies and procedures	p. 11	<b>p. 6</b>
Designate a person and/or office to be responsible for agency internal communications	p. 12	<b>p. 5</b>
For major initiatives, develop and circulate messages, Q&As, and talking points	p. 14	<b>p. 8</b>
Select key communication vehicles and use them well	p. 14	<b>p. 7</b>
Follow up after management meetings	p. 15	<b>p. 8</b>
Use meetings for accountability and feedback on communications	p. 15	<b>p. 4</b>
Design different vehicles for different content	p. 16	<b>p. 7</b>
Provide employees with all articles and releases issued by Public Affairs	p. 17	<b>p. 7</b>
Establish an 800-number hot line	p. 18	<b>None</b>
Do not rely on one form of communication to deliver important messages	p. 18	<b>p. 7</b>
Address military-type communications in Air Traffic	p. 18	<b>p. 6</b>

# **APPENDIX B**

<b>Recommendations as Ranked by Senior Managers (16)</b>			
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>No. 5</b>	<b>No. 4</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>
For major agency initiatives, develop and circulate messages, Q&As, and talking points	10	4	4.44
Develop an internal communications strategy and create clear, concise, straightforward messages	8	5	4.41
Communicate directly to employees on important personnel, benefit, performance, and employment issues	7	8	4.41
Ensure that decisions made at management meetings are communicated clearly, briefly, and promptly	8	5	4.31
Develop specific communications vehicles to convey information to employees on changes in agency policies and procedures	7	7	4.16
Make Assistant Administrators personally responsible for communicating agency's messages	5	8	4.00
Provide electronic (ccmail, Intranet, Internet) access to all employees	7	4	3.94
Change the "need to know" communication style in Air Traffic	3	5	3.82
Make internal communication a key performance metric for management	5	5	3.66
Use multiple forms of communication to deliver important messages to employees (ccmail, Intranet, fax, etc.)	2	6	3.53
Establish committee to coordinate internal communication across lines of business	2	4	3.25
Provide employees with ways to respond directly to internal communications	1	3	3.20
Establish a written policy that clearly defines which vehicle should be used for various kinds of communications	1	5	2.94
Increase number of appearances by Administrator in regions and tech centers	0	4	2.94
Establish an 800-number communications hot line	1	0	2.22

<b>Recommendations as Ranked by Employees (30)</b>			
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>No. 5</b>	<b>No. 4</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>
Communicate directly to employees on important personnel, benefit, performance, and employment issues	15	10	4.30
Ensure that decisions made at management meetings are communicated clearly, briefly, and promptly	12	12	4.23
Develop specific communications vehicles to convey information to employees on changes in agency policies and procedures	10	13	4.07
Develop an internal communications strategy and create clear, concise, straightforward messages	13	6	4.03
For major agency initiatives, develop and circulate messages, Q&Aa, and talking points	8	13	3.90
Change the “need to know” communication style in Air Traffic	11	3	3.72
Make internal communication a key performance metric for management	6	10	3.66
Provide electronic (ccmail, Intranet, Internet) access to all employees	5	10	3.53
Provide employees with ways to respond directly to internal communications	5	11	3.43
Make Assistant Administrators personally responsible for communicating agency's messages	7	4	3.27
Use multiple forms of communication to deliver important messages to employees (ccmail, Intranet, fax, etc.)	5	7	3.23
Establish a written policy that clearly defines which vehicle should be used for various kinds of communications	6	7	3.23
Establish an 800-number communications hot line	3	4	2.63
Increase number of appearances by Administrator in regions and tech centers	1	5	2.63
Establish committee to coordinate internal communication across lines of business	1	6	2.38



# **APPENDIX C**

# **Audit of Internal Communications**

**Report to the  
Federal Aviation Administration**

**Office of Human Resource Management**

**podesta.com**

**January 15, 1999**

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## **Report to the Federal Aviation Administration Office of Human Resource Management**

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### **APPENDIX A: Questions**

### **APPENDIX B: Meeting List**

### **APPENDIX C: Document List**

### **APPENDIX D: Employee Survey**

### **APPENDIX E: Southern Region Plan**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**podesta.com** was asked by the Office of Human Resource Management of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to conduct an audit of the agency's communications to its employees and other stakeholders and to make recommendations for improvements. The audit that follows is based on interviews with more than 65 management and non-management agency personnel in the Washington, DC, headquarters, the Eastern and Southern Regional offices, and offices in two field locations – Ronkonkoma, NY, and Harrisburg, PA. The Southern Regional Office provided a communications plan which addresses internal communications for the region and which contains some of the same recommendations included in this audit. Interviews were also conducted with officials of unions representing the largest segments of FAA employees – NATCA, PASS, and NAATS. We also reviewed and analyzed the 1997 Employee Survey and assessed current communication methods, employee access to communications, and employee perceptions of communications. In addition, we reviewed a very helpful internal communications analysis conducted within the Office of Human Resource Management by Barry Williams, an internal consultant. The audit was conducted from November 25, 1998, through January 15, 1999.

Based on the results of this audit, **podesta.com** has made recommendations for reorganizing and improving the agency's internal communications. Following up on the audit and recommendations, **podesta.com** will develop and submit to the FAA an overall strategy and plan of action to establish goals and objectives for internal communications, needed improvements, and better practices.

### Background

The Federal Aviation Administration is a large, complex federal agency with a workforce of nearly 50,000 in 1,000 offices spread across the nation and throughout the world. It is divided into six lines of business (Air Traffic Services, Research and Acquisitions, Regulation and Certification, Airports, Civil Aviation Security, and Commercial Space Transportation), nine regional administrations, and two centers (Aeronautical Center and Technical Center). The agency not only oversees the nation's civil aviation system to ensure safety and security, but also develops new technology and implements systems to improve performance and efficiency of the nation's aviation system. In addition to managing its far-flung operations and the needs of its employees, the FAA must address the concerns and needs of many constituencies, including the flying public, labor unions, airlines, and governments.

In 1996 Congress directed the FAA to become a model of efficiency, accountability, responsiveness, flexibility, and forward thinking. The agency recognizes that it must use effective and timely internal communications to promote and support its new mission. It also recognizes that the shift to a performance-based, more business-like operation means the introduction of new policies, programs, and procedures that will directly affect most, if not all, employees as well as stakeholders. Inevitably, implementing new personnel policies, new programs, and new technology creates employee anxiety about the future, suspicion of management, and mistrust of

communications. The agency clearly recognized this problem during its recent negotiations with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association and determined that it needed to improve its internal communications.

## **Situation Assessment**

FAA Administrator Jane Garvey is committed to the reinvention process, which means instituting changes in the way the agency does its work. Recognizing the need to provide timely internal communications, she has instituted a weekly ccmall, or e-mail, from the Administrator. Additionally, she has made numerous trips to FAA facilities outside of Washington and spoken to employees via video conferences.

The Administrator's efforts have been well received throughout the agency. The vast majority of employees with whom we spoke found her ccmalls to be important, timely, concise, and to the point. Similarly, most spoke highly of the Administrator's ability to discuss important agency issues and policies in person or during video conferences.

Another well-liked and effective communication vehicle is the "all-hands" meeting or telecon held within regions or lines of business, or between field facilities in a region. Employees find the real-time exchange of information between all participants and the interaction between lower-level employees and management especially valuable.

Of the other information channels available to employees, the FAA Intranet and Internet sites, though in need of some fine-tuning, are viewed by most as a good source of detailed information on both job-related and human resource issues. The fact that employees can access information directly and not rely on others to get answers is key. The vast majority of employees are familiar with *Intercom* and recognize it as a central agency-wide publication. Employees also cited the informal newsletters published by different lines of business as a source of credible information. While these newsletters address issues of importance to the agency, they are perceived as independent and unfiltered.

While most of the agency's employees are highly motivated and satisfied with their jobs, they identify serious weaknesses in how well the agency communicates changes in policy or programs to employees and other important constituencies. Major issues the agency must address include a common lack of access to computers, communications that are not responsive to employee concerns, and a lack of management pressure on line supervisors to keep their employees apprised of important new developments.

The agency has not assigned responsibility to any one employee or office for planning and overseeing internal communications, nor is there an established system in place to disseminate information clearly, directly, quickly, or strategically. When information is made available, the structure of the agency itself and the many layers of management make it difficult to reach employees. Electronic communication is an effective means of communicating with employees; however, not all employees have access to ccmall, the Internet or Intranet. The lack of regular employee interaction both

within and between lines of business also inhibits communication across the agency and impedes employees from seeing themselves as part of one common enterprise. There is a similar “disconnect” between headquarters, regional offices and field facilities.

According to the agency's internal employee surveys, most FAA employees express high satisfaction with their jobs and their supervisors and express a strong commitment to the agency (at least their part of it), but a majority also believes that the agency does not inform them of personnel system changes, does not communicate adequately, and is not concerned about its employees.

In some cases, agency communications are discounted by employees because of their emphasis on good news and exclusion of negative news. In other cases, communications never reach their intended targets. The consequent information void is filled by an active rumor mill and by the agency's unions. Such a void can and often does lead to employee distrust of agency communications. However, many opportunities for internal communication do exist, including meetings of the management board and other groups, that could be utilized more effectively.

Based on our interviews with FAA employees and our analysis of the agency's structure and operations, we recommend the agency take a variety of steps to improve internal communications. Foremost among these recommendations is designating a person and/or office to be responsible for internal communications, and developing a strategy for such communications. Our other recommendations are as follows:

- Associate Administrators and other managers should be held accountable for communicating information and should be provided with information packages when appropriate.
- More than one communication vehicle should be used to ensure broad delivery of messages, with each vehicle used strategically and in accordance with an established communication protocol.
- Messages that address employee needs should be communicated directly to employees whenever possible.
- FAA communication vehicles should be designed around the different types of information that employees want and need, and new vehicles such as an 800 number and hot line should be established.
- A system and procedures to communicate across lines of business should be established and should include expanded opportunities for face-to-face meetings among employees.
- The Administrator's role as a key spokesperson should be expanded to include strategic messages and to reach more employees.
- All employees should have regular electronic access.
- Materials released to external audiences should be made available internally.
- The military-style system of communications in use in Air Traffic should be addressed and changed.

In the pages that follow, we note the communications practices that currently work well, identify the impediments to effective internal communications, and make recommendations for improvement.

## WHAT WORKS

- **Administrator's ccm ail**  
With near unanimity, interviewees said that they like and appreciate the Administrator's ccm ail, mainly because it is direct, concise, and shows a real interest in employees.
- **Administrator's town meetings**  
Most interviewees also agree that the Administrator's town hall meetings are excellent ways for her to connect personally with FAA employees.
- **Intranet/Internet where available**  
Employees who have access to the Intranet/Internet agree they are an excellent means of obtaining detailed information on issues of interest or concern.
- **Weekly *Intercom***  
For the most part, interviewees said that the *Intercom* is a good way to communicate information that is useful but not urgent, such as personnel changes, promotions, and issues of interest to aviation industry.
- **Informal line-of-business newsletters**  
Many interviewees said that line-of-business newsletters are a good way to keep up with what is going on within a particular line of business. Most interviewees at headquarters identified Gerry Lavey's newsletter as exceptionally informative on news within both his line of business and the agency, and it is read beyond Research and Acquisition. Lavey combines a concern about employee access to information with a matter-of-fact, sometimes humorous, style.
- **All-hands meetings**  
There was widespread agreement among interviewees that all-hands meetings provide welcome opportunities for real-time exchange of information and interaction among employees and management.

# IMPEDIMENTS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

## *Structural Issues*

The agency's structure is itself an impediment to effective communication. Several factors contribute to compartmentalized thinking, tunnel vision, and barriers that prevent the effective flow of information throughout the FAA:

- The agency's size, nearly 50,000 employees, makes it difficult to develop and implement an internal communications system that addresses the needs and concerns of all employees.
- The FAA's geographic distribution with 1,000 offices across the country complicates the communication process and often leads to "a disconnect" between headquarters, the region and the field.
- Other complicating factors are the specialized communities that exist within the FAA. Some communities, such as the six lines of business, or "stovepipes," are operationally driven. Other communities like field or regional offices are organized by location. There are also communities which are composed of union or non-union employees.

These sociological factors, combined with the employees' differential access to technology and equipment as well as various levels of responsibility, individual need, and commitment, contribute to the complexity and difficulty of implementing an effective, timely, and consistent communications system.

### ➤ **Many employees lack access to ccmil, the FAA Intranet, and the Internet.**

Effective communication is impossible without the right tools. Those employees who have ccmil, Intranet and Internet access find them effective communication tools. Ccmil is quick and direct, and the Intranet and Internet give employees a "sense of control" because they do not have to rely on others to answer their questions. The Intranet and Internet are increasingly being used in daily tasks and projects, as well as to find answers to questions about pay, the budget, and benefits. Many employees, however, do not have easy, regular access. This group includes air traffic controllers and many employees in field facilities, especially those who must travel to maintain equipment.

In one field facility visited, all employees in the office share one line for ccmil and Intranet/Internet access – and use that same line for the fax machine. Further, a user must dial into the Washington server but often will get a busy signal, even on weekends. As a result, employees may check their ccmil messages only once a day (if at all), and there is little opportunity to search the agency Internet or Intranet sites for needed information. Other field facilities had no access at all to the Internet and Intranet. It should not be assumed, therefore, that messages posted on those sites are



available to all employees. Also, ccmall is relied upon by many within the agency to transmit important messages and action items. These messages may be lost or read too late by employees without regular access. According to some interviewees, more and more employees have computer access at home and can often read through their ccmall or search the websites from home.

### ***Recommendation***

- **Provide electronic access to all employees.** All employees should have regular, reliable access to ccmall, the Intranet and Internet. Ccmall is increasingly being used by employees in their day-to-day responsibilities. When used properly, it is also an effective way to communicate with large numbers of employees quickly and directly. If ccmall, the Internet, and Intranet are going to be used to communicate important information, employees want to be sure they have access to those vehicles.

Use of the Intranet and Internet is also increasing. Most employees have access to these sites either at home or in the office. Information can be made available by posting it on the regional or office webpage or at some other designated location. This would reduce the amount of paperwork and the huge number of ccmalls. Employees turn to these sites for technical information as well as for answers to human resources questions or to keep up with national issues. When other vehicles (e.g., ccmall, memos, pay stub inserts) are used to communicate messages, employees should be directed to the Intranet for additional information. Having a place to turn for detailed information reduces employees' anxiety and reduces problems associated with filtering of information from person to person.

Newsletters should be one form of communication available on the Intranet. Employees would have access to this information at all times and could choose to read newsletters of interest to them or not, at their leisure. Currently, many of these newsletters are sent via ccmall.

- **Ccmall is overused and often impedes communications.**

Most interviewees complained about the overwhelming amount of ccmall they receive. The primary complaint was that ccmall is overused and often impedes communications. One interviewee went so far as to say that the continuous barrage of ccmall was "negatively impacting his productivity." It seems clear that the inherent ease of ccmall use is compromising its function to deliver important information quickly and directly. Agency employees are sending all types of information by ccmall, whether or not it is urgent, and creating communication havoc with the system. Part of the problem is due to the fact that there is no protocol for the sending of ccmall. As a result, there are many instances where an urgent message requiring immediate action, such as an item from an Associate Administrator, is buried in a flood of ccmall that includes messages

about “an FAA bake sale on the other side of the continent.” Overall, most interviewees appreciated the efficiency and access ccmall provides, but stressed the importance of identifying appropriate uses, prioritizing messages, and targeting the right audience with the right message.

### ***Recommendation***

- **Establish a protocol that clearly defines the intended purpose and appropriate use of each type of communication:**
  - ✓ Phone and fax – immediate and urgent.
  - ✓ Ccmall – immediate. Management messages should lead with a clear identifier (e.g., MGMT:) in the subject line.
  - ✓ Intranet and Internet – extended and expanded information. Important or time-sensitive news posted here should also be brought to employees’ attention via ccmall.
  - ✓ *Intercom* – agencywide news that is not time-sensitive. If supported by additional employee feedback about content, this may be a vehicle for covering “meaty” issues in depth.
  - ✓ Telecons – real-time discussion and exchange of information, planned in advance.
  - ✓ Video conferences – appropriate vehicle for major announcements of agencywide importance. For greatest effectiveness, these should be scheduled well in advance, with employees notified by ccmall and on the Internet.
  - ✓ Bi-monthly pay stub – possible vehicle for news about employee benefits, other information of interest to entire workforce.
  - ✓ Employee newsletters – are useful and should be encouraged.

- **Employees believe there is “a disconnect” between headquarters, region, and field communications.**

According to some interviewees there is “a disconnect” among headquarters, region and field communications. Several interviewees cited the lack of a communications process or the absence of a formal system to ensure messages are communicated correctly and efficiently throughout the agency. There is significant frustration, especially among employees at the regional level, with the agency’s failure to provide clear and consistent messages. One interviewee, for example, commented that the agency’s functions had changed: At one time headquarters provided support to the field, but now the roles are reversed, and the field is expected to serve headquarters. However, despite this role reversal, headquarters does not solicit or encourage input from the field. This interviewee also commented that the agency’s failure to collect valuable information from the field is detrimental to program implementation because employees in the field offer knowledge and experience not available at headquarters. Conversely, another interviewee commented that there are times when regional offices communicate on an issue without informing or receiving input from headquarters.

## ***Recommendations***

- **Broaden the Administrator's reach as key spokesperson.** The Administrator's weekly cmail communications should continue and wherever possible should be sent to every agency employee (even if that requires sending it to home computer addresses). In addition to providing timely information, it should also be used to communicate strategic messages. Administrator Garvey's visits to the region are also well received and should be expanded. Her human touch goes a long way toward creating and solidifying a sense of community and shared purpose within the agency.
- **Associate Administrators should carry messages.** Associate Administrators should acquire communication skills to enable them to communicate important messages to agency employees directly, especially when major announcements are forthcoming and should be tasked with carrying the Administrator's message forward. In addition to their substantive responsibilities, Associate Administrators should serve as ambassadors of the Administrator, delivering the agency's messages to employees – especially to those in the regions and the field – and stakeholders.

- **Little, if any, coordination or cooperation exists across lines of business.**

According to most interviewees, there is very little cooperation, much less coordination, across lines of business when it comes to internal communications. "No one knows what others do," admitted one interviewee. "Communication between lines of business is poor," said another. While the Administrator's cmail and the Intercom are designed for all agency personnel, communication about most issues, programs, policies, and procedures takes place within each line of business. In the view of some, communications also break down within a line of business among the mini-lines of business. Each line of business has its own operational concerns and, beyond the bi-weekly meetings of the management board, there is little contact between or among employees in different lines of business. Cultural differences may also play a role, especially between air traffic controllers and the rest of the agency.

## ***Recommendation***

- **Establish and coordinate internal communication across lines of business.** A designated individual or office should establish a system and procedures to communicate across lines of business. The agency should create an internal communications committee composed of representatives from each line of business to devise and implement common, coordinated communications. In general, opportunities should be provided for employees to meet employees from other lines of business or parts of the country. Learning what other employees do and how employees' responsibilities inter-relate creates better understanding within the agency.

- **Too many layers of management stifle the flow of communications up and down.**

Passing down information through several layers of management often results in delay, miscommunication, or change in meaning, as in the game of “telephone.” By the time a message gets from the top to the bottom (assuming it gets there), the meaning may be changed or lost, and confusion may result. When it involves a directive, said some interviewees, much “back and forth is needed to clarify what exactly must be done at the ground level.”

Another interviewee pointed to the problem of “cascading” information through many levels where it gets “selectively filtered.” This interviewee thinks “you have to let as much of the workforce hear information unfiltered” to reduce confusion. Many interviewees mentioned the need for more direct communication – from the person issuing the message to all affected individuals. For example, interviewees said they want to hear about a policy change from the person responsible for making that change, or hear about an unscheduled holiday (e.g., Christmas Eve) from headquarters. When a message is filtered through several layers, end recipients typically don’t trust the information they receive.

Employees are not shy about contacting the Administrator via cmail, and all of them appear to know that option is available. For questions about day-to-day operations or specific questions about pay or benefits, however, lower-level employees must go through their immediate supervisors and then to the appropriate region contact, who then communicates with headquarters. Unless the employee happens to know someone at headquarters, he or she finds it difficult to go directly to an original source for information. In addition to the filtering problem, this process takes time. On the other hand, the use of “all-hands” teleconferences and meetings, either between region and field staff, within a line of business, or between several field facilities, are generally well-liked and viewed as good opportunities to exchange information directly between layers, thereby overcoming some of the difficulties noted above.

### ***Recommendation***

- **Eliminate or reduce unnecessary layers.** Information should be communicated directly to employees. Whenever possible, it should be sent to the region and field at the same time. Within headquarters, designated communicators should be trusted to do their jobs and not be required to obtain approval from multiple sources before releasing a message.

## ***Operational Issues***

While the agency has many forms of internal communication – ranging from ccmall to newsletters to the *Intercom* – it has not assigned someone to take charge of organizing a systematic internal communications system. The current setup is ad hoc and reactive rather than consistent and strategic. While some forms of communication work well – e.g., the Administrator's ccmall and line-of-business newsletters – the lack of a strategy and the failure to address employee concerns with clear, concise, and timely messages leads to employee confusion, dissatisfaction and distrust. Instead of looking to FAA communications to obtain information they need, many employees rely on rumor and outside sources. By directly confronting the operational problems and considering the recommendations identified below, the agency has an opportunity to improve its internal communications.

### **➤ There is no strategy for internal communications.**

The agency's internal communications combine a wide array of vehicles from meetings to ccmalls, from stovepipe newsletters to the weekly *Intercom*, from faxes to the Intranet, from telecons to video conferences. Despite this vast system of internal communications, it is carried out without any overall strategy as to which issues should be addressed or for which audience(s) or by which messenger(s). As one interviewee stated, "FAA communications are ad hoc and reactive. There is no organized consistent system to communicate with FAA employees."

With no overarching internal communications strategy, there is nothing to guide those who carry out the communications other than their judgment as to what is important and their knowledge of what is going on. This often leaves a void, creates unnecessary confusion, and can leave employees at the mercy of other communicators – daily and trade press, labor unions, and others. As another interviewee observed, "We need to develop strategic messages early.... We need to take the mystery out in order to cut down on the rumor mill and misinformation."

### **➤ Communications are not timely, clear, or written to grab the attention of employees.**

According to some interviewees, particularly at the field level, messages about new policies or procedures are typically received late or not at all, or the information may come in bits and pieces. For example, while the Accountability Board began operation on June 30, one field facility visited did not receive a final, complete memo explaining the board until July 31. Similarly, a change was made to the air traffic manual regarding weight classes of aircraft, yet the field office received no hard copy of the new policy. Notification of the Administrator's video broadcasts is often received the day before or day of the event, allowing no time for managers to locate and reserve available space or for employees in field or regional offices to adjust their schedules.

Employees want to be able to read a message and understand it quickly. They want

information in plain English as opposed to “bureaucratic speak” that requires interpretation. While they prefer short, to-the-point messages in most instances, when it involves a specific task or directive, they want specific detailed instructions. Currently much unnecessary back-and-forth communication is required in order to clarify many directives. Employees are not familiar with all acronyms used within the agency. Thus, they would like to see all acronyms defined within a message. Furthermore, one interviewee observed that “people who craft messages often assume that recipients have same level of knowledge that the writer does.” In other words, those in the agency responsible for communicating information cannot take for granted that recipients understand the background of what is written.

Employees want to know exactly how something will impact them in a real, practical way. They do not necessarily want to know exactly what a policy, for instance, says, they want to know what it *means* for them and their day-to-day responsibilities. According to many interviewees, employees are more apt to read and pay attention to a message if they are told up front why it is important to them. Dense, bureaucratic, legalistic, carefully edited text tends to be less accessible to employees who, inundated with cemail and other information, may have less time to read and absorb material.

### ***Recommendations***

- **Develop an internal communications strategy and create clear, concise, straightforward messages.** Once an internal communications strategy is adopted, messages supporting the strategy should be brief and to the point. Among other things, they should directly address how employees will be affected by the information being communicated and be written in plain English. Brief background information should be included in view of the fact that many employees may not know how a particular issue or policy change originated.
- **Address employee needs for information on changes in policies and procedures.** Communication about changes in policies and procedures should be approached with the employee's point of view in mind. Messages should show how a policy or procedure change affects employees' daily jobs and responsibilities.

- **The agency has no coherent, consistent internal communications process.**

The FAA's internal communications problems stem not just from its structure but from the lack of a communications plan or process. There is no coherent, consistent system for developing and sending a message within the agency, or a method to determine its effectiveness or how well or poorly it is received. Furthermore, according to most interviewees, there is no method to guarantee that employees get the information they

need in a timely matter. For the most part, new employees are not briefed on the FAA communications process, nor are they told where to turn with communications-related questions. The lack of a systematic process was evident at every level of the organization. The only employees who were somewhat satisfied with communications were union members, but they relied on their unions for “reliable” information.

➤ **No one has responsibility for corporate internal communications.**

When discussing the internal communications process, interviewees consistently identified one problem as very significant and critical – the fact that no one was responsible for internal communications. Neither a position nor a person has been designated to focus on internal corporate communications. Many interviewees expressed the view that internal communications are not a priority for the agency. This perception was reinforced when the *Intercom* was cut back and *FAA World* discontinued. Although some interviewees complained that the *Intercom* lacks substance, others believe it is a communications vehicle still appreciated by many agency employees. The lack of an office or person responsible for the agency’s internal communications is evidenced, said some interviewees, by the confusion, rumors, misinformation, and frustration that often results when information is not received, is received too late, is obtained from other sources, or is difficult to understand.

***Recommendation***

- **Designate a person and/or office to be responsible for agency internal communications.** The FAA needs to devote resources to internal communications and corporate message. An internal communications strategy must be developed and someone with extensive internal communication experience assigned responsibility to execute it. This function and person(s) could be established within the Administrator’s office or the Office of Public Affairs.

➤ **Communications tend to be ad hoc and reactive.**

There is no *system* or strategic plan for internal communication. Messages come from many different sources in many different forms. A common characterization of internal communication was “haphazard.” Many interviewees said they could not assume information would be disseminated to them. Further, they don’t know exactly where to go to get information they need. Most recognized the need for an effective and consistent system.

Managers especially see a lack of communications planning. The general feeling is that the agency does not anticipate questions or concerns employees may have, but instead deals with them as they arise. One interviewee likened the agency to “firemen” who “see smoke and put it out.” One suggestion was to prepare a list of frequently asked questions – and responses – to use when the agency is rolling out a new program, in

contract negotiations with a union, or in similarly high-profile situations. Another recommendation was to think about communication early in the process whenever a policy or procedure change or similar matter is being discussed, and incorporate communication into the decision-making process.

➤ **Policy and procedure information is not tailored to specific groups of employees.**

Another issue identified as an internal communications problem by a number of interviewees was the failure to tailor policy and procedure information to specific groups of employees. Given the FAA's size, range of issues, multiple locations, and diversity of its workforce, it is critical to target the right audience with the right message. Some interviewees mentioned situations where ccmall intended for a specific audience was sent agencywide. Others commented that a policy directive that only affected union members was sent to all FAA employees. Such miscommunication resulted in confusion, frustration, and the loss of valuable time as administrators, managers, and employees struggled to reconcile the problem.

➤ **Employees believe communications should be honest and direct, even when negative.**

Many interviewees commented on how the agency handles communication when it concerns "good" as opposed to "bad" news. Usually, say interviewees, only good news is communicated (through formal means), although most employees have their own informal ways (the "grapevine," the "water cooler," "newspapers," "ccmail") of finding out about problems, especially in their areas of interest and responsibility. As a result, many employees feel upper management is not being honest with them, thereby hurting management's credibility. Further, most employees do not want negative information "sugar coated," and they don't want to be talked down to. They want the facts communicated in a direct and forthright manner.

➤ **Agency communications are seen as slower and less responsive than union communications.**

A common observation made by both agency personnel and union representatives interviewed is that when it comes to communications about contract negotiations or other labor union issues, union communications are faster, more direct, and more responsive to the concerns of employees. This is in part due to the fact that union communications do not undergo the same kind of policy and legal scrutiny that is required before the agency communicates information during periods of rapid change. As one interviewee noted, "The FAA is not good at making quick decisions. The union puts out information about what the contract negotiation issues are, who's doing what, and what the debate is about. The FAA will not do that." Another interviewee pointed out that the union addresses employee concerns "regularly and specifically" while the FAA's communications are either "too general" or "not desired by some audiences." The FAA's major unions also utilize pagers, Intranet, ccmall, voice mail, faxes, and other technologies to communicate with their members. While the agency uses these technologies, the FAA is hampered in communicating with air traffic controllers because



controllers do not have access to ccmall and the Intranet while they are working. This situation allows union communications to have a much greater impact on the views of employees even though some interviewees stated that union communications often contained incorrect information.

### ***Recommendations***

- **For major initiatives, develop and circulate messages, Q&As, and talking points.** It is important to develop and provide an information package when a new initiative or policy is announced. This information package must be made available in advance to FAA Administrators, managers, supervisors, and union liaisons. The packet should include:
  - The point of contact/FAA person responsible (and phone number).
  - The message in clear and understandable terms.
  - The key items that must be communicated.
  - Message points.
  - Frequently asked questions and appropriate responses.
  - An executive summary (in the case of an extensive directive or policy order).
  - If available, a press release.

This information will help keep the message consistent and ensure key issues are covered.

- **Select key communication vehicles and use them well.** Key vehicles such as ccmall, the Administrator's broadcast message, the Intranet, etc., should be selected and used as effectively as possible. They should be used strategically, taking into consideration the type of information being communicated, the urgency of the message, and the intended audience. The infrastructure should be in place throughout the entire agency so that every employee has complete access to the selected vehicles.

- **Meetings often conclude without responsibilities assigned for communications.**

Many interviewees noted that they participate in numerous meetings. While meetings are useful with regard to exchanging information and making personal contact, they note that no assignments are given and no responsibilities taken for communicating the information to employees beyond those participating in the meeting. As one interviewee observed, "the meeting will conclude with no plan for forwarding or communicating the message with FAA employees." This can mean that important information is not passed on to other employees or is passed on in ad hoc manner without any clear message or direction.

## ***Recommendations***

- **Follow up after management meetings.** When decisions are made at management meetings regarding changes in policies or procedures, announcements on technology, safety, or security issues, someone should be designated to follow up on efforts by Associate Administrators to ensure accountability in distributing communications to their employees. Moreover, a feedback mechanism to check the status of communication delivery and receipt should be implemented.
- **Use meetings for accountability and feedback on communications.** All meetings involving internal communications should establish an accountability process and procedure for feedback when decisions are made to distribute communications throughout the agency or to specified employees. Managers and supervisors should be held accountable for providing feedback as to when communications are received and who has received them.

- **Employees feel a lack of communications that articulate a common mission.**

One problem identified by a number of interviewees was that employees do not receive communications that articulate a common mission. While employees receive a large volume of internal communications and information, they nevertheless feel little connection to the agency's mission and objectives. While some interviewees said they want to be a part of the agency's mission, they do not feel that the messages they receive encourage such participation.

- **Interest in communications depends on what they're about.**

Based on the interviews conducted, employees see internal communications falling into three basic categories: 1) human resources (e.g., pay, benefits, furloughs), 2) broad national issues, and 3) day-to-day job requirements. All FAA employees share a need for and interest in the first category (called "global issues" by one interviewee), while interest in the second category varies from employee to employee, and need for the third category changes from day to day and depends on an individual employee's tasks and responsibilities.

Interviewees emphasized that it is extremely important to communicate information about human resource issues in clear and understandable terms. Interviewees said the terminology is often bureaucratic, technical, and confusing, and the meaning gets lost. This is one area in which most interviewees saw a lack of information. All interviewees agreed human resource announcements should be a priority for the Administrator and that if communication was improved in this one area, it would make a real difference in

how employees at all levels view the organization.

Interest in national issues varies according to an employee's long-term career plans, responsibilities, and professional status. Most interviewees agreed this information should be made available, but that it does not need to be sent directly to all employees.

All employees want information about issues, orders, policy directives, or announcements that affect them or their jobs. One interviewee at headquarters, with 10 of his 14 FAA years in the field, said, "Everyone wants to know what he/she needs to do their job – and to get it done." Because of the nature of this type of information, one broad message will not fit all employees. Interviewees cited the need to target this type of information so that only those affected receive it. They also spoke of the need to convey this information directly from the person originating the message to the people responsible for implementation, instead of filtering the message through several layers.

### ***Recommendation***

- **Design different vehicles for different content.** The content of FAA communication vehicles should be designed around the issues that agency employees care about and that the Administrator wants employees to know about. For example, the agency might consider building its communications around the following content areas:

- FAA People – new employees, promotions, retirements, awards
- FAA Bulletin – hot issues, immediate, from Administrator
- FAA News – bi-weekly information on management meetings
- FAA Future – issues being considered, allow for input from all levels
- FAA Policy – new policy, high priority
- FAA Operations – new procedures
- FAA Program – new programs
- FAA Technology – new technology
- FAA Employee – benefits, jobs, training, pay

- **Some available communication options are not utilized.**

According to a number of interviewees, the FAA misses many opportunities to provide employees with information on changes in program, policy, procedures, new technology, safety or security issues, etc., especially if the news is considered "bad." When information is made public through the Office of Public Affairs, for example, there is no procedure to ensure that the same information is sent to employees who may be directly affected or involved. As a result, the employees find out the information from the trade press, newspapers, television, or other media.

Another example involves information about the annual budget. Instead of providing useful information in accessible formats, information was simply put on the agency's

website. "The supervisors were not told it was on the website, they had to proactively search for it," said one interviewee. Moreover, simply providing budget information without any context or explanation provided by FAA management leaves employees to make their own judgments and draw their own conclusions.

### ***Recommendation***

- **Provide employees with all articles and releases issued by Public Affairs.** Information prepared for the media and the public should be communicated internally. The Office of Public Affairs should make media releases available to the person(s) or office responsible for internal communications in order to avoid incidents in which employees read or hear about FAA matters in the media before reading or hearing about them through internal means.

- **Lack of communication leads to rumors, misinformation, and distrust.**

Among both managers and employees interviewed, there is general agreement that the failure to provide information encourages rumor, speculation, and the circulation of misinformation. This concern came up especially with regard to reinvention issues, negotiations with labor unions, changes in job descriptions, pay and benefits, etc. One interviewee, for example, pointed out that during the NATCA contract negotiations, the FAA made "no attempt to correct mistruths posted on the union website or spread by the rumor mill." There are some who believe that lack of communication is a signal that managers "ignore employee concerns." Others argue that "employees should not have to seek out information about new policies or determine if a new policy affects them."

Whether it is because employees do not have access to cmail, or because they have to share computer terminals, or because they rely on a chain of command to provide them with internal communications, or because they are inundated with too much non-relevant information, employees often end up turning to other employees to "find out what's going on." This kind of interaction often leads to the circulation of misinformation and the formation of opinions which can result in not trusting agency information once it is read, seen, or heard.

## ***Recommendations***

- **Establish an 800-number hot line.** An 800-number hot line should be established to provide up-to-date information about directives, personnel policies, leadership changes, White House announcements or other matters that impact the FAA. Access should be available 24 hours a day/7 days a week, with the option to transfer to a live person during normal business hours for additional information. An Intranet chat room should also be considered.
  - **Do not rely on one form of communication to deliver important messages.** Given the varied availability, distribution, and use of technology by FAA employees, more than one form of communication should be utilized. Urgent messages, for example, should be sent electronically and followed up with a phone call.
- 
- **Some groups of employees distrust FAA communications more than other groups.**

The FAA's 1997 Employee Survey revealed a number of significant differences among employees in different lines of business regarding job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisors, value alignment, organizational commitment, and organizational communication. Overall, the survey showed that the vast majority of FAA employees were satisfied with their jobs and their immediate supervisors, regardless of the line of business they were in. However, large numbers of employees, especially those in Air Traffic (AAT) and to a lesser extent in Airway Facilities, expressed dissatisfaction with FAA communications.

The attitudes of employees in AAT differed substantially from employees in other lines of business. For example, only 33% of AAT employees agreed with the statement that "information is communicated adequately," while 45% of employees not in AAT agreed. Similarly, in response to the question, "Do you receive sufficient information on policy changes?" 73% of AAT employees (compared to 53% of non-AAT employees) responded either "not at all" or "to a limited extent." These attitudinal differences were also reflected in response to the question, "Are your workgroup's values and the FAA's values similar?" Fifty-eight percent of AAT employees responded "not at all" or "to a limited extent," compared to just 28% of non-AAT employees.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Questions for FAA Personnel Regarding Internal Communications Audit**

How do you receive communications – e-mail; fax; posted; newsletter; circular; website?

What's the best way? Why? What's the worst way? Why?

Do you get the weekly e-mail from Administrator Garvey? If yes, do you read it?

Do you (the employee/union rep.) have access to e-mail or the FAA website?

How often do you access the website?

How often do you receive e-mail communications?

What types of communications do you receive?

What types of information communicated by FAA officials via these methods?

Do communications contain important information?

Do communications address your concerns?

From whom do you receive communications?

What types of communications are most important to you?

What types of communications are most relevant to your job?

Are the communications clear?

Are the communications timely?

Are you receiving too many, too few, or just the right number of communications?

Are you informed in a timely and clear way of changes in policies that affect you and your job?

Are you concerned that you are not hearing about important decisions that are being made and that will affect your job?

Are the communications from FAA officials better now than a year ago? Somewhat better? A lot better?

Did FAA do a good job communicating about the NACTA contract? If not, what needed to be done better?

Are you able to initiate communication with FAA officials?

Do you rely more on official communications or word-of-mouth?

How can communications be improved?

Would a 1-800 number or an e-mail address for comments be useful? Would one be more useful than the other? If so, specify.

How do you think this communication tool (800 number, e-mail, website, other) could be used more effectively to facilitate FAA dialogue and input from the headquarters, the regional and other offices?

# **APPENDIX B**



NAME	TITLE	OFFICE	DATE
Bailey, Brenda	Computer Specialist	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Belger, Monte	Deputy Administrator		16-Dec
Bergen, Kathleen	Manger	Public Affairs	15-Dec
Blum, Carolyn	Regional Administrator	Southern Region	15-Dec
Brackett, Scott	Manager	Human Resource Management Division	15-Dec
Brill, Steve	Manager	Airports Division - Atlanta	16-Dec
Brown, Steve	Associate Administrator	Air Traffic Services	15-Dec
Chandler, Jay	Aviation Safety Inspector	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
DeJoseph, Fran	Acting Manager	Flight Standards District Office - Atlanta	16-Dec
Douglas, Cooley	Cabin Safety Inspector	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Fanfalone, Michael	President	PASS	16-Dec
Flynn, Cathal (Irish)	Associate Administrator	Civil Aviation Security	15-Dec
Garvey, Jane	Administrator		29-Dec
Gifford, Patrice Allen	Special Assistant		17-Dec
Gilligan, Peggy	Deputy Associate Administrator	Regulation and Certification	22-Dec
Harman, Scot	Manager	Airways Facilities - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Hart, Christopher	Assistant Administrator	System Safety	
Hunt, Dana	Manager	Civil Aviation Security - Atlanta	15-Dec
Jennings, Vi	Administrative Officer	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Johnson, Robert	Manager	System Management Office - Atlanta	16-Dec
Lavey, Gerry	Chief of Staff to the Associate Administrator	Research and Acquisitions	16-Dec
Lesser, Norma	Special Assistant for Communications		15-Dec
Leverenz, Ruth	Assistant Administrator	Region and Center Operations	14-Dec
Maillett, Louise	Assistant to the Assistant Administrator	Policy, Planning and International Aviation	18-Dec
McNally, Mike	President	NATCA	17-Dec
McSweeney, Tom	Associate Administrator	Regulation and Certification	22-Dec
Paquin, Tracy	Regional Liaison Officer		14-Dec
Parris, Jim	Union Liaison	NAATS	14-Dec
Payne, Kay	Chief of Staff to the Associate Administrator	Civil Aviation Security	15-Dec
Bailey, Brenda	Computer Specialist	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Belger, Monte	Deputy Administrator		16-Dec
Bergen, Kathleen	Manger	Public Affairs	15-Dec
Blum, Carolyn	Regional Administrator	Southern Region	15-Dec
Brackett, Scott	Manager	Human Resource Management Division	15-Dec
Brill, Steve	Manager	Airports Division - Atlanta	16-Dec
Brown, Steve	Associate Administrator	Air Traffic Services	15-Dec

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Chandler, Jay	Aviation Safety Inspector	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
DeJoseph, Fran	Acting Manager	Flight Standards District Office - Atlanta	16-Dec
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Garvey, Jane	Administrator		29-Dec
Gifford, Patrice Allen	Special Assistant		17-Dec
Gilligan, Peggy	Deputy Associate Administrator	Regulation and Certification	22-Dec
Harman, Scot	Manager	Airways Facilities - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Hart, Christopher	Assistant Administrator	System Safety	
Hunt, Dana	Manager	Civil Aviation Security - Atlanta	15-Dec
Jennings, Vi	Administrative Officer	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Johnson, Robert	Manager	System Management Office - Atlanta	16-Dec
Lavey, Gerry	Chief of Staff to the Associate Administrator	Research and Acquisitions	16-Dec
Lesser, Norma	Special Assistant for Communications		15-Dec
Leverenz, Ruth	Assistant Administrator	Region and Center Operations	14-Dec
Maillett, Louise	Assistant to the Assistant Administrator	Policy, Planning and International Aviation	18-Dec
McNally, Mike	President	NATCA	17-Dec
McSweeney, Tom	Associate Administrator	Regulation and Certification	22-Dec
Paquin, Tracy	Regional Liaison Officer		14-Dec
Parris, Jim	Union Liaison	NAATS	14-Dec
Payne, Kay	Chief of Staff to the Associate Administrator	Civil Aviation Security	15-Dec
Peterman, Amy	Aviation Safety Assistant	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Rivera, Fanny	Associate Administrator	Civil Rights	8-Dec
Rivers, Stan	Director	Airway Facilities Services	11-Dec
Schellenberg, Carl	Assistant Administrator	Financial Services	6-Jan
Shuck, Mel	Manager	Flight Standards District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Spitaliere, Diane	Manager	Media and Internal Communications	8-Dec
Sullivan, Patrick	Assistant Manager	Airports District Office - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Traynham, David	Assistant Administrator	Policy, Planning and International Aviation	18-Dec
Tucker, Courtney	Senior Policy Analyst	Civil Aviation Security Policy and Planning	15-Dec
Ward, Mark	Manager	Air Route Traffic Control Center - Atlanta	16-Dec
Williams, Barry	Organization Development Consultant		15-Dec
Zaidman, Steve	Acting Deputy Associate Administrator	Research and Acquisitions	

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Zylowski, Stan	Manager	Air Traffic Control Tower - Atlanta	15-Dec
Salac, Arlene	Manager	Public Affairs - Eastern Region	17-Dec
Haralam, Ann	Manager	Logistics Division - Eastern Region	17-Dec
Ruggeri, Ron	Manager	Air Traffic Automated Flight	17-Dec
		Service Station - Ronkonkoma, NY	
Feldman, Arlene	Regional Administrator	Eastern Region	17-Dec
Kort, Nora	Administrative Support	Air Traffic Tower - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Broomell, Glenn	Manager	Air Traffic Tower - Harrisburg	5-Jan
Smith, Patti Grace	Associate Administrator	Commercial Space Transportation	29-Dec
Merrio, Theresa	Procurement Analyst	Logistics Division - Eastern Region	17-Dec
Peters, Jim	Specialist	Public Affairs - Eastern Region	17-Dec
Stanton, Bob	Training Specialist and Administrator	Air Traffic Automated Flight	17-Dec
		Service Station - Ronkonkoma, NY	
Tyler, Beverly	Operations Manager	Air Traffic Automated Flight	17-Dec
		Service Station - Ronkonkoma, NY	

# **APPENDIX C**

## DOCUMENTS COLLECTED DURING FAA THE AUDIT/INTERVIEWS

*Documents are grouped by source. Publications obtained from headquarter offices are listed in the first grouping; all others are listed in the second grouping including region and field section*

### FAA HEADQUARTERS, Washington, DC

***Administrator's Daily Alert Bulletin*** (Daily) Published by Washington Ops Center; Reports accidents, errors, occurrences. Distributed to headquarters and some regions

***Intranet*** (FAA electronic website)

***Headquarters Intercom*** (Weekly) Distributed by WA Headquarters

***FAA News*** (As Needed) Distributed by WA Office of Public Affairs

***News Clips*** (Daily) Distributed by WA Office of Public Affairs

***The Air Traffic Controller*** (Monthly) Published by National Air Traffic Controllers Association (AFL-CIO)

***Air Traffic Facts*** (Bi-Weekly) Published by Air Traffic Control Classification, Compensation and Negotiations

***ARA Highlights*** (Bi-Weekly) Distributed w/in line of business

***ATS News*** (Weekly) Distributed w/in line of business

***AST News Bulletin*** (Monthly) Distributed w/in line of business

***PASS Times*** (Bi-Monthly) Published by the Professional Airways Systems Specialists; Distributed w/in line of business

***PASS Newsletter*** (As Needed) Published by the Professional Airways Systems Specialists

***Annual Report*** (Annual), 1996 Published by the Financial office; Distributed to the Hill and available upon request

***This is the FAA*** (history of FAA; last revision 7/93)

***FAA Strategic Plan 1998*** (Annual) Distributed by Administrator's Office

**Regional Offices – Harrisburg, PA; Atlanta, GA; and Ronkonkoma, NY**

***Regional Administrator's Daily Bulletin*** (Daily; Atlanta, GA) Published by Southern Region Ops Center

***Airports Division Staff Meeting Minutes*** (Weekly; Atlanta, GA) Notes from weekly staff meetings are published Airports Division staff

***FAA Southern Region Human Resource Management Division Webpage***  
Southern Region's HR office regularly updates

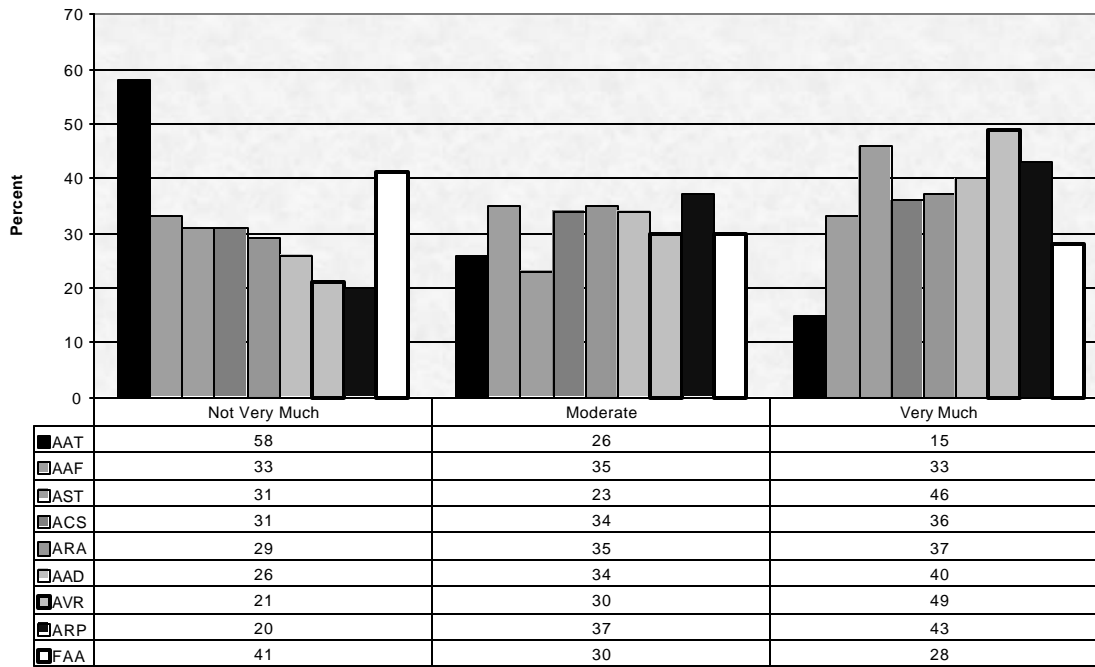
***FAA Hot News*** (Weekly; Atlanta, GA) – Distributed by Southern Region; one-page electronic newsletter; also available via a recorded message on a 1-800 phone number

***IntercomOnline*** (Quarterly; Atlanta, GA) Distributed by Southern Region

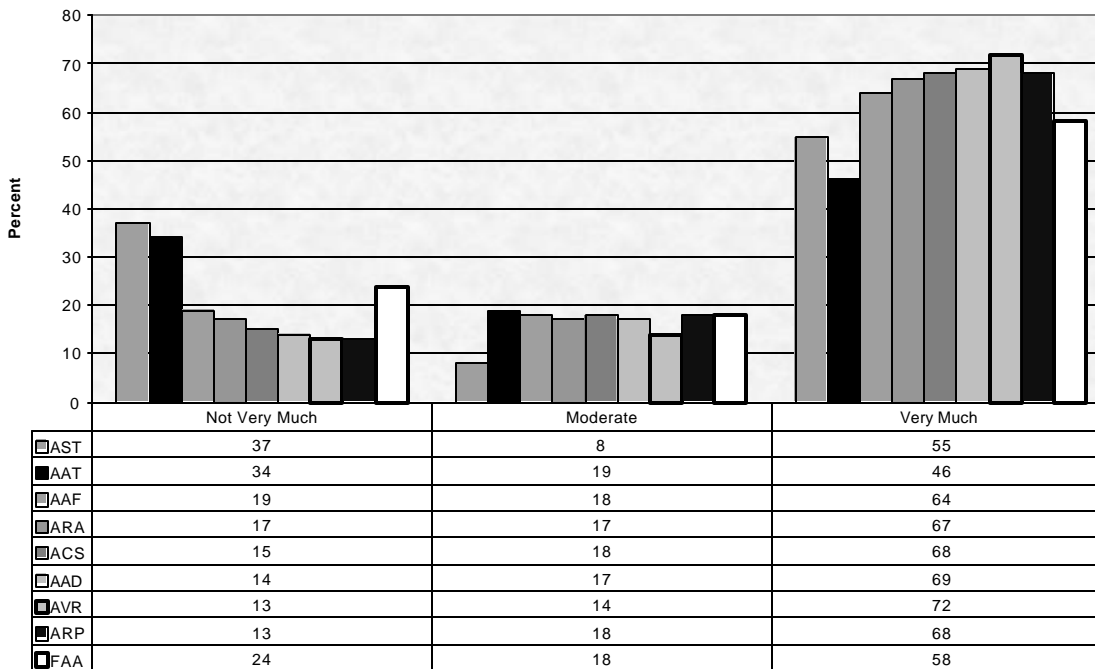
**NY AIFSS BRIEFS, "Service to the Aviation Community"** (Monthly)  
Distributed by Eastern Region

# **APPENDIX D**

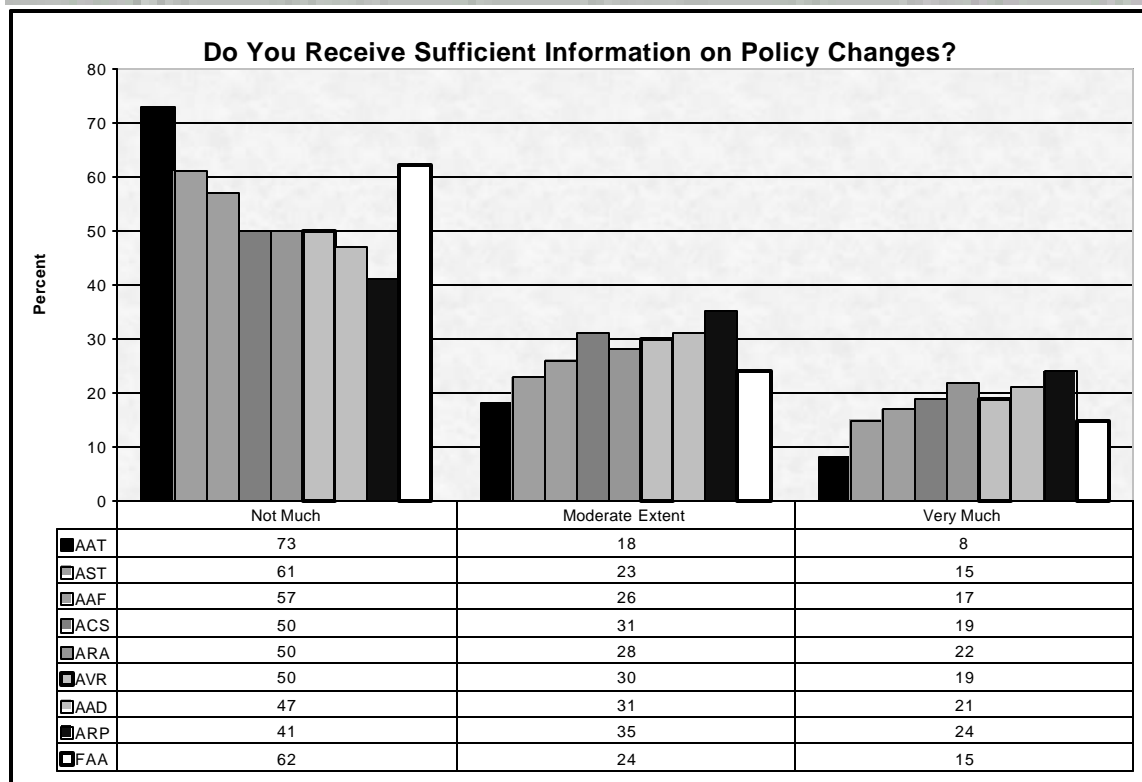
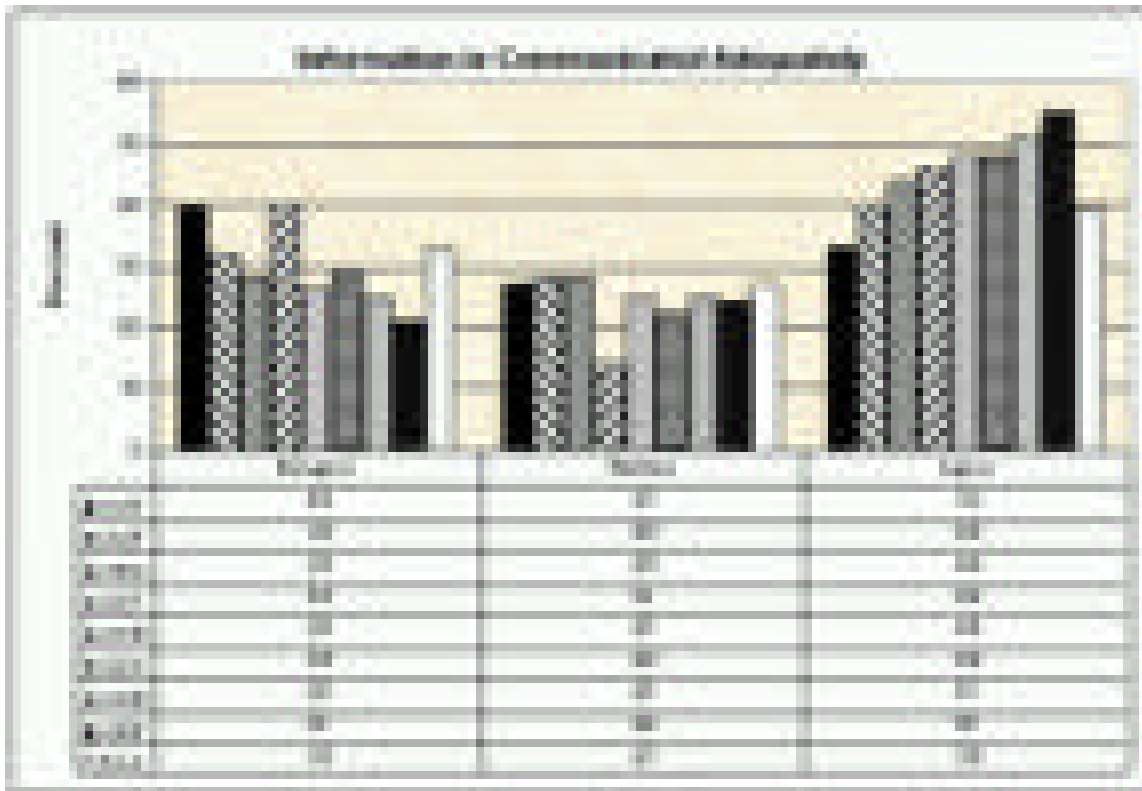
### Are Your Workgroup's Values and the FAA's Values Similar?

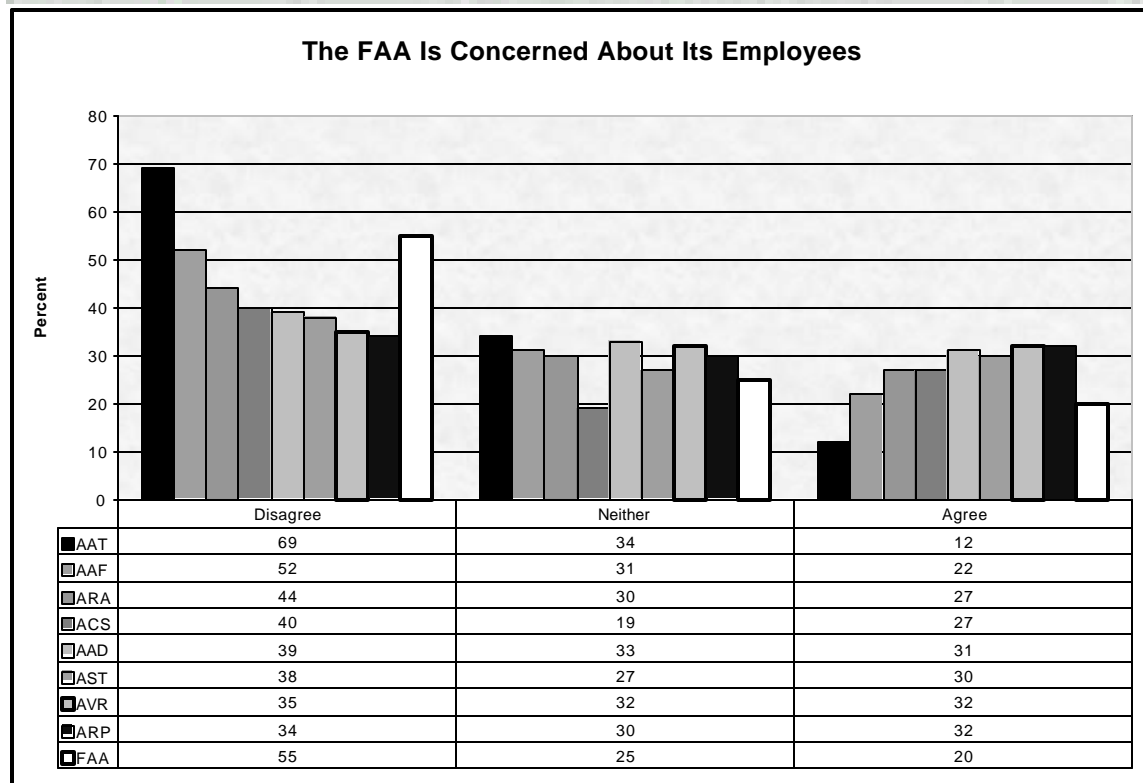
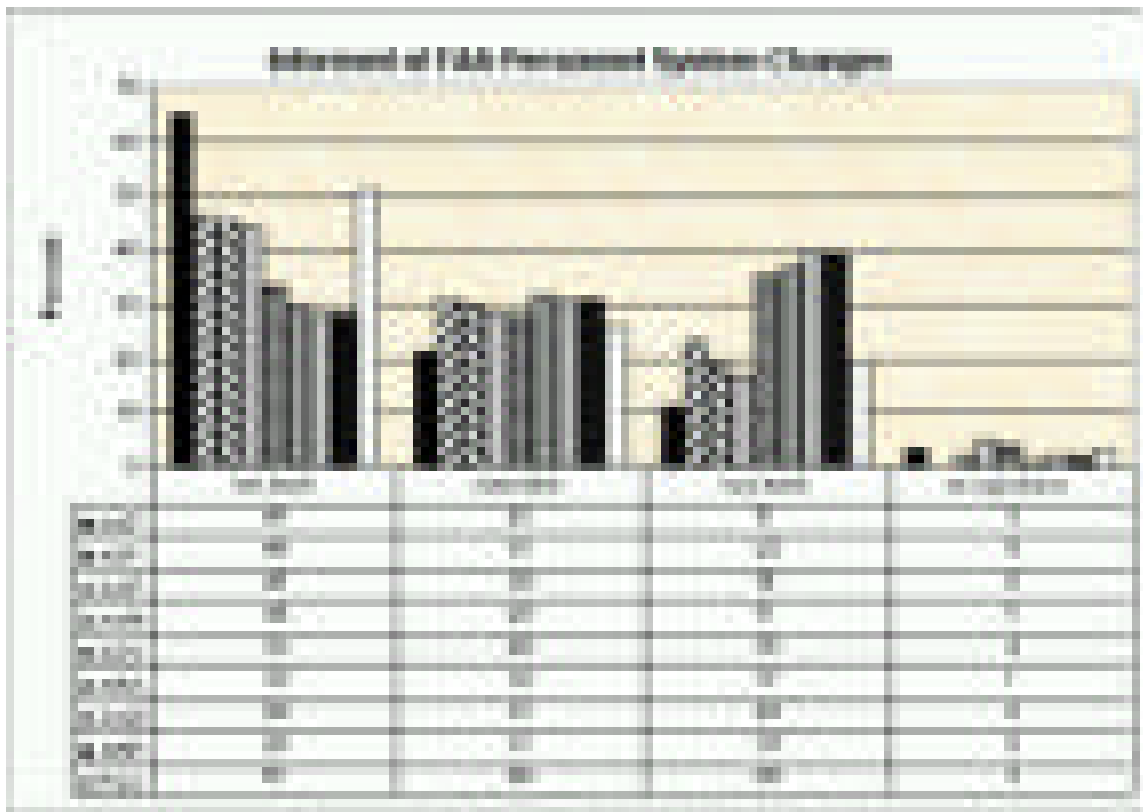


### To What Extent Are You Committed to the FAA?

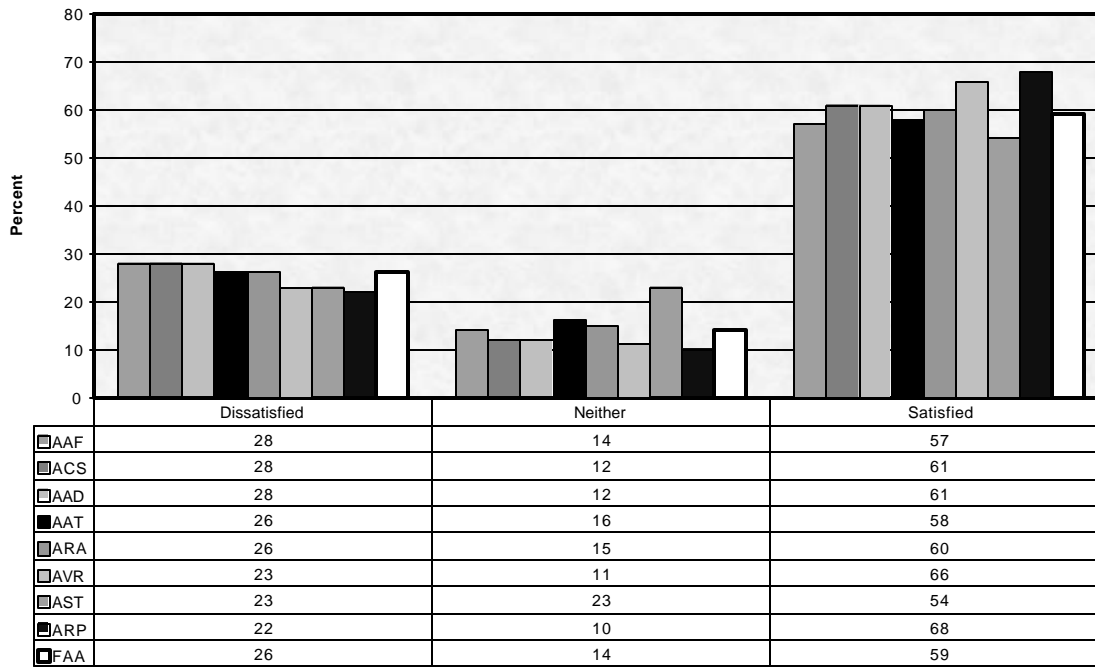




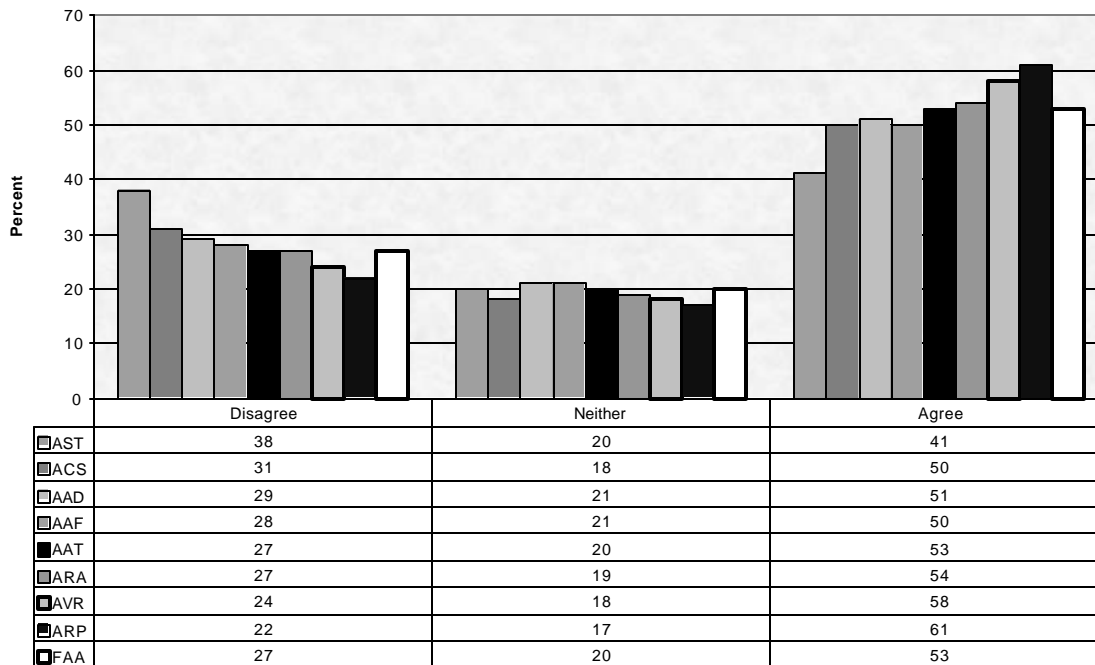




### Are You Satisfied with Your Supervisor?



### My Supervisor is Fair



# **APPENDIX E**



## ***Employee Communications in FAA Southern Region***

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*A study, based on:*

- *Survey of RMT and field managers*
- *Extensive literature search*
- *Discussions with corporate communications officers*



## ***Employee communications are important to corporate America.***

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*Majority of companies spend more time on employee communication than on media relations or investor relations.*

*Hill & Knowlton Public  
Relations*



## *According to our employees...*

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- *Many want to know more about their colleagues, their region and their agency.*
- *Others say they are overwhelmed by information overload.*



## *A Catch-22?*

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- *How can we satisfy those with a “need to know” in a way that’s sensitive to employees’ information overload?*



## *Our Recommendations*

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- *Make an online publication the linchpin of our employee communications program.*
- *Support it with an employee awareness program.*
- *Make sure employees know how to access it.*



## *IntercomOnline*

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- A collaborative publication, featuring articles written by ASO divisions, submitted from the field, taken from existing publications.





## *Why an online publication?*

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- Readers can screen information for themselves.
- It can be emailed or faxed and printed out, if necessary.
- Key parts can be quickly updated while less timely articles and photos remain.
- It has multimedia potential.



## *Why an online publication?*

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- It promotes regional unity among straightlined organizations by organizing communications under one ASO umbrella.
- Our online publication could server as a pilot that could be implemented nationally.





## *Why an online publication?*

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- Online communication says FAA is looking to the future.
- Employees are already online:
  - 23 ASO Internet sites
  - 4 ASO intranet sites



## *Promote awareness*

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- *Reminder messages on paycheck stubs*
  - Attention ASO Employees: Check out IntercomOnline at [www.address.gov](http://www.address.gov) for Southern Region News. Or, see the Hot News bulletin board for the latest news for Human Resources.
- *Posters, periodic email remainder messages*



## *Promote awareness*

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- *Flyers in cost center pay envelops*
- *Cross media reminder in each news source*



## *Education is critical*

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- *Print the first copy of IntercomOnline*
  - *Articles about the Internet*
  - *Instructions for accessing IntercomOnline*
  - *Instructions for posting IntercomOnline where Internet access is limited*
  - *Online reporter's kit*



## ***In conclusion***

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- *Online publication provides a depth of information not possible with print.*
- *It can be updated easily and has multimedia potential.*
- *It could server as a pilot for the agency.*
- *It tells employees that we have our eyes on the future.*